

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 SY-05 SCCT-01 USSS-00 OPR-02

AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07 OMB-01 CCO-00 FBO-02 /086 W

----- 078123

O R 091217Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3727

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY APRIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

CDR USSAG-NKP

DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3186

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LA

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT MAY 9

REF: VIENTIANE 3144

BEGIN SUMMARY. WHEN DEMONSTRATORS REACHED EMBASSY MAY 9

I CALLED PRIME MINISTER, PROTESTED INADEQUATE POLICE

PROTECTION AND DEMANDED THAT ADEQUATE PROTECTION BE PRO-

VIDED. SOUVANNA URGED ME TO CONTACT FOREIGN MINISTER

PHOUMI AND SOON AFTERWARDS PHOUMI CALLED AND WE ARRANGED

THAT I SHOULD CALL ON HIM. DURING SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION,

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I AGAIN CRITICIZED LACK OF POLICE PROTECTION AND RAISED

QUESTION AS TO PGNU'S CAPACITY TO GOVERN AND DESIRE FOR CONTINUED U.S. PRESENCE AND AID. GOVERNMENT ORDERS IN CASES OFFIGHTING ON ROUTE 13 AND PROHIBITING OF DEMONSTRATIONS HAD BEEN BLATANTLY IGNORED. DID PGNU SUPPORT DEMONSTRATORS' DEMAND TO WITHDRAW USAID?

PHOUMI APOLOGIZED FOR INCIDENT AT EMBASSY AND SAID HE HAD TRIED TO HAVE DEMONSTRATORS CALMED. HE ASSURED ME ADEQUATE POLICE PROTECTION WOULD BE PROVIDED. HE SAID PGNU POLICY REMAINED THE SAME. PGNU CONTINUED TO WANT AID BUT MILITARY ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO GOVERNMENT AND NOT JUST TO VIENTIANE SIDE. HE EXPLICITLY AFFIRMED LPF WAS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO WORK IN FRAMEWORK OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENTS.

HE EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR CONTINUED FRANK RELATIONS. I REPLIED THAT I SHARED HIS DESIRE AND HOPED I WOULD LEARN OF ANY ISSUES DIVIDING US FROM HIM RATHER THAN FROM DEMONSTRATORS. HE THEN REAFFIRMED LPF DESIRE TO WORK WITHIN VIENTIANE AGREEMENTS, MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS AND RECEIVE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE.

COMMENT: EVIDENCE OF LPF INTENTIONS WILL BE IN PGNU'S ACTS. WE SHOULD SEE HOW THINGS DEVELOP THIS WEEKEND. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS CLEAR THAT IMMEDIATE ISSUE WILL BE THAT OF AID, BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY. WHILE WELCOMING AID, PHOUMI NEVER ENDORSED USAID AND EXPLICITLY SAID MAP SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO PGNU AND NOT JUST VIENTIANE SIDE. END SUMMARY

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, WHEN DEMONSTRATORS REACHED EMBASSY I CALLED PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA. I TOLD HIM OF DEMONSTRATION, SAID THAT I WAS BLOCKED AT THE EMBASSY, AND WAS SEEKING TO REACH FOREIGN MINISTER BECAUSE I FOUND POLICE PROTECTION TOTALLY INADEQUATE. I DEMANDED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE AMERICAN MISSION PERSONNEL AND BUILDINGS BE PROTECTED. I ADDED THAT THIS DEMONSTRATION RAISED QUESTIONS IN MY MIND REGARDING TRUE POSITION OF GOVERNMENT SINCE DEMONSTRATIONS HAD BEEN HELD IN VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TWO
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DAYS AGO. SOUVANNA WAS SHAKEN, PARTICULARLY WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT DEMONSTRATORS HAD PENETRATED COMPOUND AND PULLED DOWN AMERICAN FLAG. HE URGED ME TO SEE FOREIGN MINISTER AS I WAS TRYING TO DO, AND PLEADED THAT WE NOT LOSE OUR COOL, "SANGFROID." I SAID WE HAD REMAINED COOL FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS BUT I CONSIDERED THIS DEMONSTRATION A VERY SERIOUS MATTER.

2. A FEW MINUTES LATER PHOUMI CALLED PERSONALLY. I WENT OVER TO THE SAME GROUNDS WITH HIM OVER THE PHONE BUT ASKED FOR A MEETING AT HIS EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. HIS SECRETARY CALLED BACK A FEW MINUTES LATER AND SAID THAT PHOUMI HAD SPOKEN WITH PRIME MINISTER WHO HAD EXCUSED HIM FROM GOING TO AIRPORT TO RECEIVE CROWN PRINCE AND WOULD I COME OVER RIGHT AWAY. I DID AND SPENT THREE QUARTERS OF AN HOUR WITH HIM IN BROAD RANGING CONVERSATION.

3. I MADE SAME TWO POINTS ONCE AGAIN: A) WE DEMANDED ADEQUATE POLICE PROTECTION FOR AMERICAN INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONNEL, AND B) ALTHOUGH I WAS WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS AND WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY, DEMONSTRATION TAKEN IN CONTEXT OF TRENDS OF LAST FEW WEEKS RAISED BASIC QUESTIONS IN MY MIND OF WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAD WILL AND CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER HERE AND IN THE REST OF THE KINGDOM AND WHETHER GOVERNMENT DID IN FACT DESIRE CONTINUATION OF U.S. PRESENCE AND AID. I SPOKE OF OUR EFFORTS TO KEEP EVERYONE CALM, CONTINUE OUR PROGRAMS, AND HELP GOVERNMENT STABILIZE SITUATION. I REPEATED STEADINESS OF U.S. POLICY, BUT I POINTED OUT IF SITUATION DETERIORATED FURTHER IT WOULD INDEED BE DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE. GOVERNMENT HAD SAID FIGHTING ON ROUTE 13 SHOULD CEASE, AND YESTERDAY TWO USAID TRUCKS HAD BEEN STOPPED BY LPF PATROL AT HIEN HEUP. GOVERNMENT HAD DECREED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DEMONSTRATIONS AND WE HAD THIS MORNING OVER 1,000 DEMONSTRATORS CHANTING ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS PARADE BEFORE EMBASSY. DID PGNU SUPPORT, FOR INSTANCE, DEMAND TO WITHDRAW USAID?

4. PHOUMI SAID SITUATION NATURALLY TROUBLED BECAUSE OF EVENTS IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM. THERE WERE PEOPLE IN

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CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNITIES WHO WERE FOMENTING

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O R 091217Z MAY 75

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3186

DIFFICULTIES. BUT THERE WAS NO REASON TO LEAVE COUNTRY, AND HE WAS CONFIDENT EVERYTHING WOULD CALM DOWN. HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED HIS OWN AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S APOLOGIES FOR PEOPLE BREAKING INTO EMBASSY COMPOUND AND STRIKING FLAG. HE HAD SENT HIS CHEF DE CABINET OUT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE LEADERS OF THE DEMONSTRATION. HE ASSURED ME THAT ADEQUATE POLICE PROTECTION WOULD BE PROVIDED AMERICAN INSTALLATIONS.

5. AS REGARDS PGNU POLICY, IT REMAINED THE SAME. IT WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE IN NEIGHBORING STATES. PGNU CONTINUED TO WELCOME U.S. AID, IN FACT IT PREFERRED BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE BECAUSE FORMER WAS SIMPLER TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HANDLE. HOWEVER, AS HE HAD TOLD ME PREVIOUSLY, HE THOUGHT MILITARY ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO GOVERNMENT AND NOT JUST TO ONE SIDE. I AGAIN POINTED TO FACT THERE WERE TWO ZONES AND LPF FORCES WERE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY FROM ABROAD. HE SAID THAT HAD BEEN TRUE DURING WAR, BUT THEY WERE RECEIVING NOTHING ANYMORE.

6. I ASKED EXPLICITLY IF WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME OF PGNU

POLICY WAS ALSO THE VIEW OF THE LPF. WAS THE LPF PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENTS? HE EXPLICITLY AFFIRMED THAT IT WAS.

7. WITH REGARD TO THE MILITARY SITUATION ON ROUTE 13, HE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME PREVIOUSLY, THAT SITUATION WAS RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEOS BUT THAT A JOINT TEAM WAS AT VANG VIENG AND HE HOPED THAT IT COULD BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY.

8. HE EXPRESSED DESIRE TO HAVE FRANK RELATIONS AS HE HAD HAD WITH AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE PREVIOUSLY AND HE REPEATED THAT POLICY OF PGNU REMAINED UNCHANGED. TO THIS I SAID I TOO WANTED TO HAVE FRANK RELATIONS. I HOPED HE WOULD LET ME KNOW DIRECTLY IF THERE WERE ANY ISSUE INVOLVING THE U.S. TROUBLING HIM. I WOULD NOT WANT TO LEARN OF A CHANGE OF PGNU POLICY BY DEMONSTRATORS. FOR INSTANCE, I WANTED TO BE SURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO WANT U.S. AID AND DID NOT SUPPORT DEMANDS FOR ELIMINATION OF USAID. HE AGAIN EXPLICITLY AFFIRMED THAT LPF WANTED TO WORK WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF VIENTIANE ACCORDS, MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND RECEIVE ASSISTANCE.

9. COMMENT: PHOUMI IS NOT EASILY FATHOMABLE. IT MAY BE THAT HE DOES WANT TO STABILIZE SITUATION AND MAINTAIN COALITION GOVERNMENT. IT MAY BE, ALTHOUGH THIS IS VERY MUCH OF A VISCERAL FEELING, THAT HE HAS BEEN TAKEN ABACK BY MAGNITUDE AND RAPIDITY OF DEVELOPMENTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT MAY BE THAT EVENTS ARE MOVING WITHIN GUIDELINES AND THAT HE HAS NO INTENTIONS OF RESTORING BALANCE. WE DO NOT KNOW; THE PROOF WILL HAVE TO BE SHOWN IN PGNU'S CONCRETE DECISIONS AND ACTS.

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HOWEVER, TO ALL EVIDENCE, AID, BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY, IS GOING TO BE A MAJOR ISSUE. WHILE REITERATING DESIRE TO RECEIVE AID, PHOUMI NEVER EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR USAID NOR EXPLICITLY DENOUNCED DEMAND OF DEMONSTRATORS THAT USAID BE ABOLISHED. FURTHERMORE, LPF HAS CLEARLY SET ITS AIM AT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. GIVEN CONFUSION IN MINDEF AND FAR, THIS PROBLEM WILL BE COMING UP IMMEDIATELY.

WE ARE MEETING TOMORROW MORNING WITH ALL USAID COORDINATORS TO ASSESS THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. FOR THE TIME BEING, WE SHOULD SEE WHAT DEVELOPS THIS WEEKEND WHICH WILL LAST THREE DAYS AS PGNU HAS JUST DECLARED MONDAY A HOLIDAY. WE ARE ALSO CLOSING DOWN TO AVOID PROVIDING ANY TARGET OF UN-LAO ACTIVITY. FOOT-

NOTE: JUST RECEIVED LETTER SIGNED BY PHOUMI WHICH STATES
PGNU WILL BUY RICE TO SELL ON MARKET AT REASONABLE
PRICES AND OFFICIALLY REQUESTS LOAN OF 300 TONS OF GLUTINOUS
RICE FROM USAID. THIS WAS OUR SUGGESTION TO PRIME
MINISTER ANRBLXEDFFIS#ALMOST VERBATIM COPY OF OUR DRAFT.
YZYIWEAST#THEY APPEAR ALIVE TO EXPLOSIVE ECONOMIC SITUA-
TION. MONEY STILL TALKS.
CHAPMAN

NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3186; #PARA. 9.
AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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Message Attributes

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